MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

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INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 6

Report of the Standing Committee of Experts on Mine Clearance to the Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention

I. Introduction

1. The Standing Committee of Experts (SCE) on Mine Clearance, established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the 3-7 May 1999 First Meeting of States Parties (FMSP), met in Geneva from 13–15 September 1999 and from 27–29 March 2000.

2. At the FMSP, it was agreed in accordance with paragraph 25 of the final report of the FMSP and its annex IV that Mozambique and the United Kingdom would serve as Co-Chairs of the SCE, with the Netherlands and Peru serving as Co-Rapporteurs.

3. Representatives of 69 States, 8 United Nations bodies, the European Commission, the Organization of American States (OAS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and from numerous other relevant organizations were registered as participants in either or both of the two meetings.

4. The meetings of the SCE received administrative support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

II. Matters reviewed by the SCE

5. The SCE considered progress in reviewing and revising international standards for humanitarian mine clearance. The importance of involving all stakeholders and the need for the effective dissemination and implementation of the standards were discussed. The SCE also considered the conditions necessary for establishing a conducive operating environment for mine clearance, and the desirability of agreeing to guidelines for this.

6. The SCE received progress reports on the Study on the Use of Socio-Economic Analysis in Planning and Evaluating Mine Action, which is being undertaken by the GICHD on

behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on the Level 1 Survey activities of the Survey Action Center (SAC), and on the impact of mine clearance on peacebuilding and reconstruction.

7. The SCE explored how better planning and the setting of priorities could be assisted by the availability of better quality information, both written portfolios of potential mine action projects and electronic information available on websites. The UNMAS database, *Mine Action Investments*, was presented.

8. Ways of improving coordination among stakeholders were examined. Options for improving internal coordination within mine-affected countries were discussed, and ways of better disseminating information internationally were proposed.

9. Recognizing the importance in most cases of developing a sustainable national capacity and the valuable role that the national military could play in certain circumstances, the SCE considered issues related to the use of the military and the improvement of training for enhanced management within national mine action centres.

III. Actions taken or in process on the development of specific tools and instruments in order to assist the implementation of the Convention

10. With the active endorsement of the SCE, and on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the GICHD is revising international standards for mine clearance, which will be known as the International Standards for Humanitarian Mine Action and contain a glossary of terms and terminology. It was noted that members of the ICBL are reviewing and expanding existing guidelines and principles for good practice in mine clearance.

11. In response to a matter proposed by the first meeting of the SCE, Canada completed the task of developing the UNMAS database, *Mine Action Investments*, in such a way that donors are able to communicate information on their funding and policies underlying the provision of support for mine action. The database is functioning, though further data would be welcomed.

12. The SCE commended the *Portfolio of Mine Action Projects* issued by UNMAS and the *Compendium Document* produced by Handicap International (HI)/Mine Advisory Group (MAG)/Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) as useful foundations for identifying worthwhile mine clearance projects to support.

13. UNMAS reported on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), a planning tool for action in mine-affected countries which received widespread interest and support within the SCE.

14. With the encouragement of the SCE, the UN has developed guidelines for the use of local militaries in UN-supported mine action programs.

15. The SCE noted the ICBL website (www.icbl.org) and the suggestion that all stakeholders consider contributing to it, including through participation in "E-groups."

16. The SCE noted that *Landmine Monitor* would issue its second report in time for the Second Meeting of States Parties (SMSP), and that further funding had been requested to complete the report.

17. The SCE commended the GICHD for providing a website for information related to the work of the SCEs, undertook to provide relevant information and urged all stakeholders to visit and use the SCE portion of the GICHD site.

IV. Actions taken or in process to assist in the implementation of the Convention

18. Based upon a statement made by Canada with respect to the compatibility between international standards for mine clearance and obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, the SCE agreed that Convention obligations and international mine clearance standards are not incompatible.

19. With the active encouragement of the SCE, the GICHD is undertaking on behalf of UNDP a Study on the Use of Socio-Economic Analysis in Planning and Evaluating Mine Action.

20. The Survey Action Center has embarked on a program of Level 1 Survey work in seven countries and has plans for undertaking more.

21. At the suggestion of the SCE, the UN agreed to consider making fuller use of the Steering Committee on Mine Action.

22. The SCE called for improved availability of news about mine action, in addition to *Landmines* magazine and the UNMAS website. The second *Landmine Monitor* report would be available for the SMSP and consideration would be given to making available documentation from stakeholders (e.g., national plans and donor criteria) on websites.

23. With the active encouragement of the SCE and at the request of UNDP, Cranfield Mine Action is developing, with the support of the United Kingdom, curricula and training materials to improve the skills of mine action managers, and the first course for senior managers is being held from July-September 2000. The SCE noted that subsequent courses would be run at the regional or national level, and would require donor support to assist participation.

24. The SCE commended Nicaragua's initiative in compiling information about national (internal) coordination mechanisms and related best practice, encouraged the continuation of this initiative and suggested that all stakeholders actively consider contributing to it.

25. UNMAS was asked to consider the possibility of more closely involving donors in the annual International Meeting of Mine Action Program Directors and Advisers.

V. Recommendations made by the SCE

26. The SCE recommended that all stakeholders contribute to the UNMAS/GICHD process of revising international standards for mine action and encouraged broad participation of mine-affected countries. It was further recommended that UNMAS formally advise countries, through their missions in New York, of the opportunity to comment, with a view to UNMAS submitting these revised standards to the UN General Assembly (UNGA 55). In addition, it was recommended that national authorities of mine-affected countries, donors and mine action agencies ensure that the new standards are applied.

27. The SCE recommended that consideration be given to the effective dissemination of revised international standards for mine action (including the translation of the standards) and to the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) playing an active role in disseminating these standards along with other good practice guidelines, like the Bad Honnef guidelines.

28. The SCE recommended continued discussions by the Committee on the process of reviewing and revising international standards for mine action, including the implications of applying the standards to the requirements of emergency demining.

29. The SCE recommended that the GICHD, when preparing guidelines for establishing a conducive operating environment for mine clearance, take into account comments and views made by committee participants, including by the ICBL Mine Action Working Group.

30. In commending the relevance of the Bad Honnef guidelines, the SCE recommended that HI, MAG and NPA review and expand existing guidance and principles for good practice in humanitarian mine action.

31. The SCE recommended that the UNDP/GICHD present preliminary findings of its study on the Use of Socio-Economic Analysis in Planning and Evaluating Mine Action to the SMSP and that linkages be further explored between the framework for monitoring and evaluating mine action, as outlined by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and the UNDP/GICHD study.

32. In endorsing the work of the Survey Action Center in its continuing program of Level 1 Surveys, the SCE recommended that UNMAS/SAC disseminate survey findings and underlined the need for funding to enable additional surveys to take place.

33. The SCE recommended that donors indicate clearly their criteria and requirements for funding in order to help governments and mine action organizations seeking funding to provide proposals which are better tailored to meet donors' funding criteria.

34. The SCE recommended that UNMAS and HI/MAG/NPA consult when updating their respective project portfolios in order to make any appropriate linkages and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort; that each should identify points of contact; and that other NGOs should consider contributing to these documents.

35. Recognizing that the UNMAS database *Mine Action Investments* will be effective only if accurate and substantially complete, the SCE recommended that donors contribute full information and provide regular updates. In addition, the SCE recommended that mine-affected countries check the database and notify UNMAS of any inconsistencies or gaps and that

UNMAS consider the possibility of including information on private sector resources in the database.

36. The SCE recommended that UNMAS explore linking relevant countries' and organizations' websites and, if possible, consider incorporating information about mine affected States' national demining programs. In addition, it was recommended that mine-affected countries provide texts for inclusion in the UN database or details of relevant websites for linkage to the UNMAS website.

37. The SCE recommended that UNMAS make more use of the InterAgency Steering Committee on Mine Action (which consists of the relevant UN organizations involved in mine action, the ICRC and the ICBL) and noted the suggestion that the Steering Committee consider possible participation by regional agencies.

38. The SCE recommended that the OAS and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) share regional experiences in mine action with a view to enhancing coordination and mutual understanding.

39. The SCE recommended that UNMAS identify further ways of disseminating news on mine action, in addition to the regular publication of the *Landmines* Magazine and regular updates of its website.

40. The SCE recommended further consideration of the prospects for compiling guidelines based on lessons learned in emergency mine action in the event of natural disasters. In addition, the SCE recommended that UNMAS, in the event of a crisis or emergency mine action response, provide to interested parties regular updates on the affected countries' mine situation.

41. The SCE recommended that the IDRC consider extending to other countries the Internet database which has been created for Mozambique .

42. In the light of its discussion on UNMAS guidelines on the use of the military in mine action, the SCE recommended (*a*) that the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action review the way these guidelines are applied on a case-by-case basis; (*b*) that States Parties and donors consider the possibility of training military trainers of mine-affected countries; and (*c*) that non-UN mine action stakeholders apply the UN guidelines in all circumstances where the use of the military is an option.

43. The SCE recommended that donors and implementing agencies consider a multidisciplinary approach to mine action including, where appropriate, other mine action elements in addition to mine clearance, such as victim assistance and mine awareness education.

44. The SCE recommended that the phasing out of direct assistance to national capacities should begin at the appropriate time so as to reduce reliance on foreign assistance (e.g., the use of expatriate technical assistants) when adequate local capacities have been developed.

45. The SCE recommended that all relevant actors retain a flexible approach in following mine action guidelines and Committee recommendations.

VI. Reference to supporting documents

46. The reports and other documents relating to the two meetings of the SCE in September 1999 and March 2000 may be found on the website of the GICHD at *www.gichd.ch*.

47. The UNMAS database *Mine Action Investments* can be accessed at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/landmines/.